

AL-FATH AR RABBANI

WIR - ISMILH WIS ISMILH



Eighth Discourse - Al-Fath ar-Rabbani

It was in the schoolhouse, in the late evening of Tuesday, the 19th of Shawwal, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allah be well pleased with him) said:

The pious pretender [mura'i] wears clean clothes, but his heart is filthy. He abstains from permissible things, and is too lazy to earn a livelihood. He eats off his religion, and exercises no self-restraint at all. He consumes things that are explicitly forbidden [haram]. His game may be hidden from the common folk ['awamm], but it is not concealed from the Elite [khawass]. His asceticism [zuhd] and obedient worship [ta'a] are all superficial. His external facade is splendidly fashioned, but his interior is a ruin.

Woe unto you! Obedient service to Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He) is performed by the heart [qalb], not the outer mold [qalab]. All these things are connected with hearts, innermost beings and spiritual qualities [ma'ani]. Strip yourself bare of what you now have on, so that I may get for you from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) an outfit that will never wear out. Get undressed so that He may clothe you. Take off the garment of your indifference to the rights [huquq] of Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He). Take off the garment of your attachment to creatures and your idolization [shirk] of them. Take off the garment of lust, frivolity, conceit and hypocrisy, of your love of being acceptable to people and having them approach you and bring you gifts. Take off the clothing of this world, and put on the clothing of the hereafter. Divest yourself of your power, your strength and your very existence [wujud], and throw yourself down before the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) without power, without strength, without attachment to material means [sabab], and without idolatrous worship of any created thing. Then, if you do this, you will see His gracious favors all around you. His mercy will come to join you, and His blessing and benefit will clothe you and enfold you in their embrace. Flee to Him. Dedicate yourself wholly to Him, naked, with no you and no one other than you. Move toward Him in isolation, distinct from any other than Him. Move toward Him separately, apart, until He joins and connects you to your inner and outer forces [quwa zahirika wa-batinika]. Even if He were to close the whole universe [al-akwan] against you, and make you carry all its burdens, this would do you no harm; not at all, for He would protect you throughout.

When someone blots out creatures by virtue of his realization of Unity [tawhid], blots out this world by virtue of his renunciation [zuhd], and blots out everything else apart from his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) by virtue of his longing, that person is completely prepared for righteousness [salah] and success [najah], and he will enjoy the all the blessings of this world and the hereafter. You must experience the mortification of your lower selves, your desires and your devils, before you die. Experience the special death [al-mawt al-khass]

before the common death [al-mawt al-'amm].

O my people! Respond to me, for I am the crier of Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He), calling you to His door and His obedient service. I am not calling you to myself. The hypocrite does not call the people to Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He); he is a self-promoter. He is looking for favors and acceptance, seeking worldly gain.

O ignorant one, you give up listening to words like these, and sit there in your cell, with only your own self and your passions for company! What you need first is the fellowship of the Shaikhs [shuyukh], and the slaying of the lower self, the natural instincts and everything apart from the Master (Almighty and Glorious is He). You must stay by the door of their houses, I mean the Shaikhs', then after that you may go off by yourself, and sit in your cell alone with the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). When this has been fully accomplished by you, you will come to be a remedy for the people, a rightly guided guide [hadi mahdi] by permission of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He).

As you are now, your tongue is pious [wari'], but your heart is immoral [fajir]. Your tongue praises Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He), while your heart resists Him. Your outer being is a Muslim, but your inner is an unbeliever [kafir]. Your outer is a monotheist [muwahhid], but your inner is a polytheist [mushrik].

Your asceticism [zuhd] is part of your facade. Your religion [din] is part of your facade. Inwardly, you are a mess. It is like whitewash on the water closet, i.e. the toilet, or a lock on the garbage can. Since this is how you are, Satan has set up camp in your heart and made it a place for him to live in.

The believer starts with the development of his inner being, then tackles the development of his outer being. Someone who is constructing a house will spend large sums of money on its interior while the gateway is just rubble; he will leave fixing the entrance until after he has completed the main building. One must likewise begin with Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He) and earning His good pleasure [rida], and then pay attention to creatures with His permission. The first stage is to acquire [tahsil] the hereafter, and only then to obtain one's allotted shares [aqsam] in this world.



Al-Fath ar-Rabbani - 10

It was in the early morning of Sunday, the 24th of Shawwal, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allah be well pleased with him) said:

The Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) is reported as having said:

I and the truly devout members of my Community [umma] are free from affectation [takalluf].

One who is truly devout [taqi] does not perform his worship of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) in an affected manner, because it has become quite natural to him, so he worships Allah both outwardly and inwardly without any affectation on his part.

As for the hypocrite [munafiq], he is always pretending, wherever he may be and whatever he may be doing, especially when it comes to the worship of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), which he fakes on the surface and inwardly neglects. He is incapable of experiencing the conduct of the truly devout. Every place has its motto [li-kulli makan maqal], and every job has men who are right for it [li-kulli 'amal rija]; for war some men are naturally suited. O hypocrites, repent your hypocrisy! Come back from your fugitive exile! How can you let Satan laugh at you and vent his malice on you? You may perform the salat-prayers and keep the fast, but you do this for the sake of creatures, not for the sake of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and the same is true if you give charity [tasaddaqum], pay the alms-due [zakkaitum] and go on pilgrimage [hajajtum]. You are: "Toiling, weary" (88:3). Soon you will be exposed to the heat of a scorching fire, if you do not come to your senses, repent and make amends. You must follow [the traditional Islamic practices] without heretical innovation [ibtida']. You must follow the teachings [madhhab] of the righteous predecessors [as-salaf as-salih]. Walk on the straight highroad [al-jadda al-mustaqqima]. No extremes of religious doctrine! [la tashbih wa-la ta'til : lit., no ascription of human characteristics (to Allah), and no denial of all attributes (to Him)]. Just follow the Sunna [exemplary practice] of Allah's Messenger (Allah bless him and give him peace) without affectation and artificiality [tatabbu'], without bigotry [tashaddud], without bragging [tamashduq] and intellectual pretentiousness [tama'qul]. You should be capable of what was possible for those who have gone before you.

Woe unto you! You learn the Qur'an by heart, but you do not put it into practice. You memorize the Sunna of Allah's Messenger (Allah bless him and give him peace), but you do not practice it. So what do you do this for? You tell other people what they

must do, but you do not do it yourself. You tell them what they must not do, but you do not refrain from it. As the Almighty and Glorious One has said:

It is most hateful in the sight of Allah that you say what you do not do. (61:2)

Why do you say things and then contradict them? Have you no sense of shame? Why do you lay claim to faith, when you do not believe? Faith [al-iman] is the opponent of disasters. It is the patient bearer of our burdens. It is the wrestler. It is the fighter. Faith is the generous distributor of its worldly fortune. Faith behaves generously for the sake of Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He), while desire acts generously for the sake of the devil and for selfish purposes. He who has missed the door of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) sits at the doors of His creatures. He who has lost the path [tariq] of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) and gone astray from it, stays on the path of creatures. When Allah wishes someone well, He shuts the doors of creatures in his face, and cuts him off from their gifts, in order to bring that person back to Himself. He directs him away from the inland creeks toward the river bank. He directs him away from nothing toward something.

Woe unto you! You are happy to be dwelling beside the creeks in [the cool rainy season of] winter, but soon the [fiercely hot] summer will come and your water will all dry up. So you will die, unlike the man who lives on the bank of the great river, because his supply of water is not exhausted in the summer, and in the winter it increases and becomes very plentiful. Be with Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He), then you will become a rich man [ghani], a noble ['aziz], a leader [amir], a commander [mu'mir], a guide [dalil]. When someone has no need of anything but Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He), everything has need of him. This is something that does not come about through passive resignation [takhalli] and mere wishing [tamanni], but through something that becomes settled in the bosom [fi's-sudur] and is confirmed by active work ['amal].

O young man! Let dumb silence be your custom, unobtrusiveness your habit, and fleeing from creatures your whole aim and purpose. If you can dig yourself a den in the earth to hide away in, do it. This should be your regular practice until your faith has matured, your certitude [iqan] has gained a firm footing, the wing of your truthfulness [sidq] has grown all its feathers, and the eyes of your heart have both opened. Then you may rise up from your home in the ground and fly into the air of the knowledge of Allah. You will roam through the East and the West, over land and sea, across the plains and the mountains. You will tour the heavens and the regions of the earth, in the company of the Guide [Dalil], the Guardian [Khafir], the Companion [Rafiq]. So now set your tongue free to speak. Cast off the habit of unobtrusiveness. Stop running away from people, and come out of your den to meet them, since you can be a remedy for them without detriment to yourself. Never mind how few they may happen to be, or how many, and whether they come forward or back away. Be indifferent to their praise and their blame alike. Never mind. Wherever you alight, you will glean what you can

[aina saqatta laqatta]. And you are with your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He).

O my people! Be aware of this Creator, and practice good behavior in His presence. As long as your hearts are remote from Him, you will behave toward Him badly, but when they draw near, your conduct will improve. The pages at the palace gate indulge in foolish banter before the royal procession, but when the king rides by, a dumb silence falls upon them and they start to behave correctly, because they are now close to him. Each of them scurries to his corner.

Paying court to creatures is the very same thing as turning one's back on the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). You will find no salvation [falah] until you break off relations with people of influence and means, and stop regarding creatures as the source of benefit and loss. You are healthy yet sick, rich yet poor, alive yet dead, existent yet nonexistent. Till when this running away from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) and avoidance of Him? Till when the cultivation of this world and the devastation of the hereafter? Each one of you has but a single heart, so how can he love both worlds with it? How can it contain both the Creator and the creation [al-khaliq wa'l-khalq]? How can this be achieved as a simultaneous condition in a single heart? This is a falsehood, and as the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) says:

Falsehood holds itself aloof from faith [al-kadhibu mujanibu'l-iman].

Each earthenware pot exudes its own contents. Your deeds are clues to the firmness of your belief [i'tiqad]. Your outer is a clue to your inner. This is why a certain wise man said: "The outer is the address of the inner [az-zahir 'unwan al-batin]." Your inner is outwardly apparent to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) and to His special favorites [khawass] among His servants. If one of these should ever come your way, you must behave decently in his presence. Repent your sins before meeting with him, consider yourself insignificant beside him, and relate to him with humility. If you humble yourself for the sake of the righteous [as-salihun], you are likely to be humble toward Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He). Humble yourself, therefore, because when a person humbles himself, Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He) will raise him up high. Be on your best behavior with anyone who is senior to you, because the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) has said:

Blessed grace [baraka] resides in your seniors [akabir].

The Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) was not intending to refer to seniority in age alone, but to advanced age combined with pious dedication [taqwa] to fulfilling the commandments and observing the prohibitions [of the sacred law], and constant adherence to the Book and the Sunna [i.e., the Qur'an and the Prophet's exemplary practice]. Of course not, because there is many an elder [shaikh] who deserves neither respect nor salutation, and in seeing whom there is no blessed grace. The Seniors [al-akabir] are the devout [al-muttaqun], the righteous [as-salihun], the

pious [al-mutawarri'un], who put their knowledge into practice [al-'amiluna bi'l-'ilm] and who are sincere in their practice [al-mukhlisun fi'l-'amal]. The Seniors are the pure hearts that turn away from everything apart from Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He). The Seniors are the wise hearts with experience of Allah [al-'arifa bi'llah] (Almighty and Glorious is He), that know and are close to Him.

Whenever hearts abound in knowledge, they draw nearer to their Master (Almighty and Glorious is He). Whenever a heart contains love of this world, it is screened from Allah, and whenever a heart contains love of the hereafter, it is barred from nearness to Allah. To the degree of your longing [raghba] for this world, your longing for the hereafter is diminished, and to the degree of your longing for the hereafter, your longing for the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) is diminished. Be aware of your degrees, and do not assign yourselves to a level [manzil] on which Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He) has not placed you. This is why a certain wise man said: "If someone is not aware of his own degree, the decrees of destiny will make him aware of it [man lam ya'rif qadrahu 'arrafat-hu'l-aqdaru qadrahu]." Do not sit in a place from which you will be made to get up. When you enter a house, do not sit in a place in which the master of the house has not invited you to sit, because you may be told to move. If you refuse, you will be forced to get up, suffer humiliation, and be obliged to leave.

O young man! You have been wasting your life on the study of books and memorizing the knowledge in them without putting it into practice. What good will it do you? As the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) has said:

Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He) will say to the Prophets and the scholars on the Day of Resurrection: "You were the shepherds of the people, so how did you care for your flocks?" And He will say to the kings and the rich folk: "You were the custodians of my treasures. Did you reach out to the poor? Did you educate the orphans? Did you refund My due, which I prescribed to you?"

O my people! Take warning from the admonitions of the Messenger (Allah bless him and give him peace) and accept what he tells you. Your hearts are so hard! Glory be to the One who has made me capable of putting up with creatures! Whenever I yearn to fly away, along come the scissors of destiny to clip my wings, and yet I find consolation, of course, in the fact that I am residing in the parklands [barah] of the King.

Woe unto you, O hypocrite, you wish I would leave this town. If I did move on, the situation would be altered, the members would split up, and it would be a different story. But I fear the punishment of Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He) on account of the undue haste. I do not chart my own course; no, I cannot match the skill of destiny, so I comply with His wishes and submit to Him. O Allah, [grant] peace and salvation [salaman wa-tasliman]!"

Woe unto you! You scoff at me while I am standing by the door of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). Summon the people to Him; you will see your response. I build one cubit upward and thousands downward. O hypocrites, you will see the torment of Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He) and His punishment in this world and the hereafter. The time is pregnant [hubla]; you will see what comes of it. I am subject to the transformative power [taqlib] of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). Now He makes me become a mountain, then He turns me into a speck of dust. Now He makes me become an ocean, then He turns me into a drop of water. Now He makes me become a sun, then He turns me into a spark and a flash of lightning. He switches me around, as He switches night and day.

Every day He is about some awesome business. (55:29)

At every moment, indeed. You have all day, while others have this moment.

O young man! If you wish to breathe easy and feel good at heart [in aradta sa'ata's-sadri wa-tiba'l-qalb: lit., if you wish for expansiveness of the breast and goodness of the heart], do not listen to what people say, and pay no attention to their talk. Surely you know that many of them are neither intelligent nor perceptive, and that they have no faith [la yu'minun], but actually disbelieve and do not accept the truth? Follow the group [qawm] who understand none but the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), who listen to none but Him, and who see none but Him. Suffer with patience the harm done by people, as you seek the good pleasure [rida] of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). Patiently endure the various trials by which He puts you to the test.

This is the normal practice [da'b] of Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He) in dealing with His humble chosen servants [ma'a 'ibadihi'l-mustafaina'l-mukhbitin]. He cuts them off from everything, and tests them with various misfortunes, disasters and ordeals. He makes things cramped for them in this world and the hereafter, and everywhere from the heavenly throne [al-'arsh] to the earth below. Thus He annihilates their existence. Then, when He has annihilated their present existence, He brings them into being for Him and for no other. He makes them reside with Him and not with any other. He produces them as another creation. In His own words (Almighty and Glorious is He):

Then We produced it as another creation. So blessed be Allah, the Best of Creators! (23:14)

The first creation was generic [mushtarak], but this creation is uniquely individual [mufrad]. He makes him distinct from his brethren and all other members of the human race. He changes his former character [ma'na] and replaces it. He makes what was his high point become his low point. He makes him a holy [rabbani: lit., belonging entirely to the Lord], spiritual [ruhani] being, whose heart has no room for contemplating creation, and the door of whose innermost being [sirr] is barred to creatures. He makes

this world and the hereafter, the Garden [of Paradise] and the Fire [of Hell], and all created things and entities, appear to him as one single thing. Then He hands this thing over to his innermost being, and he swallows it whole, although there is no sign of his having done so.

Thus He manifests His power, as He manifested it in the staff of Moses (peace be upon him). Glory be to the One who manifests His power in whatever He wishes to whomever He wishes! The staff of Moses swallowed many bulky objects, such as ropes and other things, without any change in its shape and size. The Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) wished to teach them that this was divine power [qudra] at work, not philosophical wisdom [hikma], because what the magicians [sahara] did on that day was philosophy and mechanical engineering [handasa], whereas what was manifested in the staff of Moses (peace be upon him) was power from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), a preter-natural phenomenon [kharq 'ada] and a miracle [mu'jiza]. This is why the leader of the magicians said to one of his companions: "Take a look at Moses. What condition is he in?" and the man replied: "His complexion seems to have altered, and the staff is doing its work." Then he said: "This is through the action of Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He), not of his own doing, because a magician is not afraid of his own magic [sihr] and the craftsman does not fear his own work." Then he believed in Him, and his companions followed his lead.

O young man! When will you move up from wisdom to power? When will your putting wisdom into practice lead you to the power of Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He)? When will your sincerity [ikhlas] in your actions lead you to the door of nearness to your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He)? When will the sun of direct knowledge [ma'rifa] let you see the faces of the hearts of the common folk [al-'awamm] and the elite [al-khawass]?

Do not flee from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) on account of His trials. He is only testing you to find out whether or not you will go back to material concerns [as-sabab] and leave His door. Will you revert to the outer or to the inner? To the perceptible or to the imperceptible? To the visible or to the invisible?

O Allah, do not put us to the test! O Allah, bless us with nearness to You without a trial! O Allah, [grant us] nearness and kindness! O Allah, [grant] nearness with no remoteness! We lack the strength to bear remoteness from You, and to suffer tribulation, so bless us with nearness to You, as well as not having to go through the fire of misfortunes. But if there is to be no escape from the fire of misfortunes, let us experience it like the salamander, which is born and bred in the fire, and is neither harmed nor burned by it. Let it be for us like the fire of Abraham, Your special friend [khalil]. Cause herbs to grow all around us, as You caused them to grow around him. Enable us to need nothing at all, as You enabled him. Befriend us and take care of us, as You took care of him, and protect us as You protected him. Amin.

Abraham (peace be upon him) found the companion [rafiq] before the road [tariq], the neighbor [jar] before the house [dar], the close friend [anis] before the loneliness, the healthy diet [himya] before the sickness, patience before the affliction, and cheerful acceptance before the verdict. Learn from your father Abraham (peace be upon him). Take him as your model in his words and his deeds. Glory be to the One who treated him kindly in the sea of his misfortune; the One who set him the task of swimming in the sea of affliction and helped him through it; the One who set him the task of charging against the enemy, while He was by the horse's head; the One who set him the task of climbing to a lofty spot, while His hand was at his back; the One who set him the task of inviting the people to his meal, while He took care of the expense! This is the inner, hidden kindness.

O young man! Be with Allah in silence at the advent of His decree and His action, so that you may experience many kindnesses from Him. Have you not heard of young Galen the philosopher [Jalinus al-hakim], and how he pretended to be dumb and stupid and speechless, until he became the store of all knowledge? The wisdom of Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He) will not come toward your heart because of your frequent raving, your quarreling and finding fault with Him.

O Allah, bless us with harmony and the abandonment of discord, and:

Give us in this world good, and good in the hereafter, and guard us against the torment of the fire! (2:201)



Al-Fath ar-Rabbani - 11

It was in the schoolhouse, in the early morning of Friday, the 29th of Shawwal, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allah be well pleased with him) said:

O my people! Be aware of Allah and do not be ignorant of Him. Obey Allah and do not rebel against Him. Comply with His wishes and do not oppose Him. Accept His decision gladly and do not quarrel with Him. Recognize the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) by His handiwork. He is the Creator [al-Khaliq], the Sustainer [ar-Razzaq], the First [al-Awwal], the Last [al-Aakhir], and the Outer [az-Zahir] and the Inner [al-Batin]. He is the First from All Eternity [al-Qadim al-Awwal], the Endlessly Everlasting [ad-Da'im al-Abadi], the Doer [al-Fa'al] of whatever He will.

He shall not be questioned as to what He does, but they shall be questioned. (21:23)

He is the Enricher [al-Mughni]. He is the Impoverisher [al-Mufqir]. He is the Benefactor [an-Nafi'], the Giver of Life [al-Muhyi], the Giver of Death [al-Mumit], the Punisher [al-Mu'aqib], the Feared [al-Makhuf] and the Hoped [al-Marjuw]. Fear Him and fear none other than Him. Look to Him in hope, and have no hope of any but Him. Move in the orbit of His power and His wisdom, until the power and the wisdom prevail. Make it your practice to stay with the black-on-white [i.e., the letter of the sacred law] until something arises to prevent you from doing so, then you will be preserved from infringing the sacred law [shar'].

We are speaking here in terms of spiritual significance [ma'na], not of outer form [sura]. Only a few righteous individuals [ahad as-salihin] get to this point. There is nothing we need that goes outside the sphere of the sacred law. This subject is familiar only to those who have experience of it, so it is not something you can recognize from the bare description. In all your affairs you should be in the presence of the Messenger (Allah bless him and give him peace), ready with girded loins to obey his commands and prohibitions and to follow him, until the King summons you to Himself. Then take your leave of the Messenger (Allah bless him and give him peace) and enter His presence.

The Abdal [spiritual deputies] are so called only because they exert no

willpower [la yuriduna irada] beside the Will of Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He), and exercise no preference [la yakhtaruna ikhtiyaran] beside His preference. They apply the external regulations and perform the proper external deeds. Then they attend to the special tasks assigned to them individually. As they progress to higher degrees [darajat] and stages [manazil], they come under more and more commands and prohibitions, until they reach a stage [manzil] at which there is neither command nor prohibition, but where the orders of the sacred law are carried out spontaneously on their behalf and are credited to them, while they are personally in a state of detachment [ma'zil]. Their normal condition is that of absence [ghaiba] with the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and they are present only when the moment comes for a commandment or prohibition to be observed. Thus they are careful not to violate any of the rules of the sacred law, because nonobservance of obligatory acts of worship ['ibadat mafrudat] constitutes heresy [zandaqa], while the perpetration of things forbidden [mahzurat] is a sin of disobedience [ma'siya]. The obligatory religious duties [fara'id] never cease to be incumbent upon anyone under any circumstances.

O young man! Act in conformity with His ordinance [hukm] and His knowledge, and do not go beyond what is prudent. Do not forget the covenant ['ahd]. Struggle with your lower self, your passions, your devils, your natural impulses and your [attachment to] this world. Never despair of the helpful support [nusra] of Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He), because it will come to you with your steady perseverance. Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

Surely Allah is with those who are patient. (2:153)

The party [hizb] of Allah, surely they will be the victors. (5:56)

As for those who strive in Our cause, surely We shall guide them to Our paths. (29:69)

Restrain the tongue of your lower self from its tendency to complain to fellow creatures. Be an adversary for the sake of Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He) against it and against all creatures. You must command them to obey Him and forbid them to sin against Him. You should prevent them from going astray, introducing heretical innovations [ibtida'], following the passions and indulging the lower self. You should instruct them to follow the Book of Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He) and the Sunna of Allah's Messenger (Allah bless him and give him peace).

O my people! Respect the Book of Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He)

and take it as the guide to your behavior. It is the link between you and Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He). Do not consider it to be a thing created [makhluq]. Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He) says: "This is My speech [kalam]," and you are saying "No!" Anyone who contradicts Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He), and maintains that the Qur'an is a created object, is guilty of disbelief [kufr] in Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He), and this Qur'an is quit of him. This Qur'an which is recited, which is read, which is heard, which is seen, which is written down in copied texts [masahif], this is His speech (Almighty and Glorious is He). Imam ash-Shafi'i and Imam Ahmad [ibn Hanbal] (may Allah be well pleased with them both) maintain that the pen [al-qalam] is created, but what is written with it is uncreated, and that the heart [qalb] is created, but what is learned by heart is uncreated [ghayr makhluq].

O my people! Prove the sincerity of your respect for the Qur'an by putting its teachings into practice, not by arguing about it. Firm belief [i'tiqad] is a matter of few words and many deeds. You must have faith in it. Accept its truth in your hearts, and act upon it with your physical limbs and organs. Concentrate on what is beneficial to you. Pay no attention to defective and inferior intellects.

O my people! That which is handed down by tradition [manqul] cannot be arrived at by mental deduction, and the received text [nass] cannot be superseded by analogical reasoning [qiyas]. Do not pass over the clear evidence [bayyina] and settle for the unsubstantiated claim. People's property is not confiscated on the strength of a claim for which there is no proof. As the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) has said:

If people had only to make their claims to have them accepted, one group would claim the blood and property of another. But the burden of proof rests on the plaintiff, and the oath on the one who denies [the claim].

It is useless to have a learned tongue but an ignorant heart. The Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) is reported as having said:

There is nothing I am more afraid of for my Community [umma] than a hypocrite with a learned tongue.

O learned ones! O ignoramuses! O you who are present and you who are absent! Feel a sense of shame before Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He). Pay attention to Him with your hearts. Humbly submit to Him. Let yourselves be forged beneath the hammers of His decree. Be constantly thankful for His blessings. Shed light on the darkness in obedience to Him. Then, when this has become real as far as you are concerned, you will

receive the grace [karama] of Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He), His honor and His Paradise in this world and the hereafter.

O young man! Try hard to make sure that nothing remains in this world that you still love. When this is fully accomplished as far as you are concerned, you will not be left to your own devices for the twinkling of an eye. If you become forgetful, you will be reminded, and if you become careless you will be brought to your senses. He will not allow you to take notice of anything whatsoever apart from Himself. Those who have tasted this will know all about it from experience. Members of this category are a few unique individuals who do not accept reliance upon creatures.

O hypocrites! Misfortunes and afflictions are uppermost in your hearts. Whenever the [Lord's] people look with the eyes of their hearts at anything other than the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), they are being hypocritical. Their salvation [salama] lies in placing their trust in Him, throwing themselves down before Him, blinding themselves to His creation, and preventing their tongues from raising objections against Him. Then the days and nights may roll by them, and the months turn into years, but their condition will be one and the same, as they remain unchanging with the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). They are the most intelligent of all the creatures of Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He). If you were to see them, you would call them lunatics [majanin], and if they saw you they would say: "These folk do not believe in the Day of Judgment [yawm ad-din]." They are sad and broken-hearted in the presence of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and they are always fearful and apprehensive. Whenever the veil is lifted to reveal His Majesty and His Splendor to their hearts, their fear grows all the greater. Their hearts almost stop beating and their joints nearly come apart. Then, when He sees them in this condition, He opens up to them the gates of His Mercy [rahma], His Beauty [jamal] and His Grace [lutf], giving them hope, so that their feelings are reassured.

The only people I like to look after are seekers of the hereafter and seekers of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). As for the seeker of this world, of creatures and self and desire, what can I do with him? Of course I would like to give him treatment, because he is sick, but only a physician has the patience to treat the sick.

Woe unto you! You are trying to keep your condition hidden from me, but it will not be concealed. You represent yourself to me as a seeker of the hereafter, although you are actually a seeker of this world. This delusion in your heart is written on your forehead. Your secret is public knowledge. That dinar [gold coin] in your hand is a fake; it has a tiny fraction of gold,

but the rest is silver. You cannot palm it off on me, because I have seen a lot just like it. Hand it over and let me keep it, so that I can melt it down, extract the gold it contains, and throw the rest away. A little bit of good stuff is better than a load of rubbish. Let me take charge of your dinar, because I am a coin-minter and I have the right tools for the job.

Repent your showy pretense [riya'] and hypocrisy [nifaq], and do not hesitate to confess yourself guilty of it. The majority of sincere people [mukhlisun] have been hypocrites in their time. This is why a certain wise man (may Allah's mercy be upon him) said: "Only the hypocrite [mura'i] really knows the meaning of sincerity [ikhlas]." Rarest of the rare is one who is sincere from the first stage of his career through to the last. Youngsters at an early stage are given to telling lies and playing with mud and dirt. They get themselves into dangerous predicaments, steal from their fathers and their mothers, and spread scandalous rumors around. Gradually, as their intelligence develops, they give up one thing and then another, learning correct behavior from their parents and their teachers.

If Allah wishes a person well, he will learn to behave properly and give up his bad habits, but if Allah wishes him ill, he will go on living in the old same way, and so be a loser in this world and the hereafter. Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He) has created the remedy [dawa'] as well as the disease [da']. Disobedience is a disease, and obedience is a remedy. Tyranny [zulm] is a disease, and justice ['adl] is a remedy. Going wrong [khata'] is a disease, and going straight [sawab] is a remedy. Opposing the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) is a disease, and repenting the intoxication of sins is a remedy.

Your cure will be completely effected only when you detach your heart from creatures, connect it to your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), and raise it toward Him, to dwell in heaven while your spirit and your physical frame are still here on earth. As far as your heart is concerned, you will be secluded with the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) because of what it knows. But you will participate with fellow creatures in acting according to the rule of law [al-hukm], not differing from them in any detail of this, so that neither He nor they will have any case against you. You will be alone with your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) in your inner being, while outwardly you will be in the company of fellow creatures.

Do not allow your lower self [nafs] to rear its head. Either you ride it, or it will ride you. Either you pin it down, or it will pin you down. If it does not obey you when you wish to obey Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He), chastise it with the whips of hunger, thirst, humiliation, nakedness, and seclusion in a place devoid of any human companion. Do not lay these

whips aside from it until it becomes tame, and obeys Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He) under all circumstances. Even when it is tame, you must not stop chiding it: "Have you not done such and such, and such and such?" Apply the appropriate punishment to keep it permanently subdued.

For help in all of this, you must seek the will of Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He), comply with His wishes and refrain from disobeying Him. Your outer and your inner should be as one. There should be compliance with no resistance, obedience with no rebellion, thankfulness with no ingratitude, mindfulness with no forgetfulness, and goodness with no evil. Your heart will have no salvation [falah] as long as it contains anyone other than Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He). If you were to bow down in prostration before Him for a thousand years, on hot coals, but turning in your heart toward someone other than Him, this would not benefit you at all. Nothing will come to the heart while it loves any other than its Master (Almighty and Glorious is He). You will not be blessed with His love until you blot out everything else. What good can it do you to abstain from things while you are attached to them in your heart? Do you not know that Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He) knows what is contained within the breasts of all mankind? Are you not ashamed to say with your tongue: "I have placed all my trust in Allah [tawakkaltu 'ala'llah]," when others apart from Him are within your heart?

O young man! Do not be deceived by the gentle forbearance [hilm] with which Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He) is treating you, for the force of His wrath [batsh] is terrible. Do not be deceived by these learned men who are ignorant of Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He). All their learning counts against them, not in their favor. They are learned in the laws [hukm] of Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He), but ignorant of Allah Himself (Almighty and Glorious is He). They give people orders which they themselves do not carry out, and forbid them to do things from which they themselves do not abstain. They summon others to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), but they flee from Him. They rebel and sin against Him flagrantly. I have their names recorded, written down and listed.

O Allah, relent toward me and toward them. Present us all to your Prophet Muhammad (Allah bless him and give him peace) and to our father Abraham (peace be upon him). O Allah, do not make us tyrants to one another. Make us benefactors to one another, and include us all in Your mercy. Amin.



Al-Fath ar-Rabbani - 12

It was in the guesthouse, in the early morning of Sunday, the 2nd of Dhu'l-Qa'da, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allah be well pleased with him) said:

O young man! Your wish [irada] for the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) is not genuine. You are not really wishing for Him, because when someone claims to wish for the Lord of Truth (Glorious and Exalted is He) while he is actually seeking something other than Him, his claim is null and void. Seekers of this world are very numerous. Seekers of the hereafter are comparatively few. Seekers of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), who are honest about their wish for Him, are the fewest of the few. In paucity and scarcity they are like the philosopher's stone [al-kibrit al-ahmar]. They are unique individuals of such extraordinariness and rarity that even one of them is seldom to be found. They are the strangers among the tribes. They are mines in the earth, in which they are monarchs. They are the prefects of cities and men [shihan al-bilad wa'l-'ibad]. Because of them the people are shielded from disaster. Because of them they receive rain. Because of them Allah sends rain down from the sky, and because of them the earth puts forth vegetation.

In the first stage of their career they flee from mountain height to mountain height, from land to land, from ruin to ruin. As soon as they are recognized in a place they move on elsewhere. They cast everything behind their backs, and surrender the keys of this world to its people. They continue in this manner until fortresses are built around them, rivers flow into their hearts, and they are surrounded by troops in the service of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), each assigned to specific guard duty. Thus they are honored and protected, and are put in charge of the people. All of this is beyond their conscious minds.

At this point it becomes their obligatory duty [farida] to make themselves available to the people. They come to be like physicians when the rest of the people are sick.

Woe unto you! You claim to be one of them, so what characteristic mark ['alama] of theirs do you possess? What is the mark of nearness to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) and of His grace? In what rank [manzila] are you in the sight of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and in

what station [maqam]? What is your name [ism] and surname [laqab] in the Sovereignty Most High [al-malakut al-a'la]? Why is your door locked every night? What of your food and drink, are they barely permissible [mubah] or entirely lawful [halal talq]? What do you take as your bedfellow: this world, the hereafter, or the close presence of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He)? Who is your friend [anis] in privacy? Who is your boon companion [jalis] in public? Liar! Your friend in private is your lower self [nafs], your devil [shaitan], your passion [hawa], and contemplation of your worldly interests [at-tafakkur fi dunyaka]. In public your companions are those human devils who are your wicked mates and fellow gossip-mongers.

This is not something that comes about through idle chatter and unsubstantiated claims. What you have to say on this subject is nonsense that will do you no good. You must be calm and unobtrusive in the presence of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and give up bad behavior. If talking about this cannot be avoided altogether, your words should be devoted to the invocation of His blessings and speaking well of His people, not to making claims with your outer being when they have no substance in your heart. Everything external that is not matched by the inner is mere nonsense. Surely you have heard the saying of the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace):

No fast is kept by one who goes on eating human flesh.

The Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) has made it clear that fasting [siyam] is not just a matter of giving up food, drink and other things that technically break the fast [muftirat], but also of giving up sins. Beware of backbiting [ghiba], because it devours good deeds as fire devours wood. Successful people never make a habit of it, and those who are known for it enjoy little respect. You must also beware of the lustful gaze [an-nazar bi'sh-shahwa], because it plants the seeds of sin in your hearts, and its outcome is unworthy in this world and the next. Beware of the false oath [al-yamin al-kadhiba], because it leaves houses in ruins and takes away blessings both material and religious.

Woe unto you! You squander your material assets by swearing false oaths, and lose your religion as well. If you had any sense, you would realize that this is the very essence of loss. You say: "By Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He), there is nothing in this city to compare with this piece of property, and no one else has anything like it! By Allah, it is worth so-and-so much, and it cost me so-and-so much!" Everything you say is a lie, but then you bear false witness and swear by Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He) that you are telling the truth. Blindness and age will soon come upon you. Correct your behavior—may Allah the Exalted have mercy upon you!—in the presence of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). Those who do not discipline themselves to follow the rules of conduct [adab] prescribed by the sacred law [shar'], will be

disciplined by the Fire [an-nar] on the Day of Resurrection [yawm al-qiyama].

(Someone spoke up with the question: "If a person is guilty of these five bad habits, or some of them, do you declare his fast [sawm] and his ritual ablution [wudu'] invalid?" He said in reply: "His fast and his ritual ablution are not invalidated. These remarks are intended rather as an admonition, to give warning and alarm.")

O young man! Perhaps when tomorrow comes you will be missing from the face of the earth, nowhere to be found. Or maybe at some other hour this will be so. What is this negligence? Your hearts are so hard! You are all rocks! I tell you, and others tell you too, but you are always the same way. The Qur'an is recited to you. The traditions [akhbar] of the Messenger and the life stories [siyar] of our forebears [al-awwalun] are read to you, but you pay no attention. You neither change course nor mend your ways. If someone is present in a place where warning is given, but he does not heed that warning, he is in the best of places but he is the worst of men.

O young man! Your contempt for the friends [awliya'] of Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He) results from your having so little direct knowledge [ma'rifa] of Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He). You say: "These folk invite suspicion. Why don't they share our way of life? Why don't they sit in our company?" You talk like this because of your ignorance of your own self. When your self-awareness is slight, you have little awareness of what other people are worth. Inasmuch as you lack awareness of this world and its eventual outcome ['aqiba], you are ignorant of the value of the hereafter, and to the extent that you lack awareness of the hereafter, you are ignorant of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). O you who are so preoccupied with this world, you will soon experience loss and remorse in this world and the hereafter. Your regrets will show up clearly on the Day of Resurrection, the day of mutual cheating [yawm at-taghabun], the day of ignominious shame [fadiha], the day of remorse and forfeiture [an-nadamat wa'l-khusran]. Take stock of yourself before the advent of the hereafter. Do not delude yourself because of the tolerance [hilm] of Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He) and His generosity toward you. You are maintaining the worst possible state of affairs, through sins, mistakes and doing wrong to other people. Sin is the mailman [barid] of unbelief [kufr], just as fever is the mailman of death. Be sure to repent before death, before the arrival of the angel who is entrusted with the collecting of spirits [arwah].

O young men! Repent! Can you not see how the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) is trying you with misfortune so that you may repent, while you do not comprehend, and persist in disobeying Him? Only a few individuals are made to suffer tribulation in this day and age, but they experience it as an affliction [niqma], not as a blessing [ni'ma]; as a punishment for sins, not as a

promotion in spiritual rank and grace [ziyada fi'd-darajat wa'l-karamat]. The people [of the Lord] are put to the test in order to elevate their rank in the presence of their King. They bear with Him patiently, because they seek His countenance. When this is fully accomplished by them, they have achieved dominion [mulk]. But when this is not fully accomplished, they firmly believe that they are in damnation [hulk].

O Allah, no damnation! We beg you to let us be near to You, and behold You in this world and the hereafter; in this world with our hearts and in the hereafter with our eyes.

O my people! Do not despair of the refreshment [rawh] and relief [faraj] of Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He), for this is near at hand. Do not despair, because the Maker [as-Sani'] is Allah.

You do not know; it may be that Allah will afterward bring some new thing to pass. (65:1)

Do not run away from tribulation [bala'], because tribulation borne with patience is the basis of everything good. The foundation of Prophetship [nubuwa], of Messengership [risala], of saintship [wilaya], of direct knowledge [ma'rifa] and of love [mahabba], is surely tribulation. So if you have not borne tribulation with patience, you have no foundation. A building cannot last without a foundation. Have you ever seen a house standing firm on top of a garbage dump? You only flee from tribulation and misfortunes because you feel no pressing need for saintship, direct knowledge and the nearness of Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He). Be patient, and work until you can ascend with your heart [qalb], your innermost being [sirr] and your spirit [ruh] to the gate of nearness to your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He).

The 'ulama' [learned scholars], the awliya' [saints] and the abdal [spiritual deputies] are the heirs of the Prophets [anbiya']. The Prophets are the brokers [samasira], and these others are their advertising agents [munadun].

The believer [mu'min] is afraid of none but Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He), and looks in hope to none but Him, for he has been given courage in his heart and his innermost being. How can the hearts of believers fail to be encouraged by Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He), since He has made them ascend to Him? Their hearts [qulub] are always with Him, while their outer form [qalab] is here on the earth. As Allah (Exalted is He) has said:

And in Our sight they are surely of the chosen, the excellent. (38:47)

They are chosen over their own relatives and their contemporaries. Their inner natures [ma'ani] are marked with distinction, and their outer frames

[mabani] are enlightened. This is why they have detached themselves from people and abstained from ordinary habits. They have forged ahead, and the grass has sprung up to cover their tracks. They can no longer turn back. They have grown accustomed to solitude. They prefer the desert, the shores of the oceans, the open spaces and the wastelands, not civilization. They eat the herbs and drink from the pools to be found in the deserts. They become like the beasts of the wild.

In this situation, He draws their hearts near to Him and delights them with His company. He lodges their frames with the frames of the Messengers [mursalun], the champions of truth [siddiqun] and the martyrs [shuhada'], and He lodges their inner natures with Himself. They always stand ready to serve, all night and all day, in private. Such is the comfort of those who yearn, and the pleasure of those who seek intimacy with Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He).

O young man! Sweetness is inevitably paired with bitterness, righteousness [salah] with corruption [fasad], and turbulence [kadar] with serenity [safa']. If you wish for total serenity, therefore, you must detach your heart from creatures and connect it to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). You must part company with this world. Leave your family and entrust them to the safekeeping of your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). Strip your heart bare of everything, approach the door of the hereafter and then enter it. If you do not find your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) in there, come out of it and flee in quest of nearness to Him. When you find Him, you will find complete serenity in His presence. What has the lover [muhibb] of Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He) to do with anything other than Him? Paradise is the home of those who seek spiritual status [darajat], the home of merchants who have traded this world for it. This is why Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

And therein is all that selves [al-anfus] desire and eyes delight in. (43:71)

He does not mention the heart [qalb]. He does not mention the innermost being [sirr]. He does not mention spiritual content [ma'na]. Paradise belongs to upright keepers of the fast, to those who renounce and abstain from the desires and pleasures of the flesh. They have traded one kind of food for another kind of food, a garden for a garden, an abode for an abode.

From you I want deeds without talk. The gnostic ['arif] who works for the sake of Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He) is an anvil that gets hammered on, but never says a word; a plot of land that gets trodden over, changed and altered, but stays quite dumb. The [Lord's] people see none other than Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He), and none but Him do they hear. They have an inner core [janan] but no tongue [lisan]. They become extinct [fanun] to themselves and to others, and they remain in this condition. When Allah wishes, He resurrects them

[ansharahum]. He makes the inner core a tongue, as if they were drugged [mubannajun]. The King takes them to Himself with the hand of His compassion [ra'fa] and mercy [rahma]. He shapes them for Himself and creates them for Himself, not for any other. He fashions them for Himself as He fashioned Moses (peace be upon him), for as He told him: "I have fashioned you for Myself" (20:41).

There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing. (42:11).

He brings into being a rest with no weariness, a friendship with no alienation, a blessing with no pain, a joy with no unpleasantness, a sweetness with no bitterness, a dominion with no damnation.

There, protection belongs only to Allah, the True. (18:44)

When someone has attained this state, comfort [raha] is made available to him here and now. In the condition you are in, however, you will not find comfort in this world, because it is the abode of turbulence, the abode of disasters. You are bound to leave it, so you should expel it from your heart and from your hand. If you cannot manage this, then keep it in your hand, but expel it from your heart. Then, when you get stronger, let it go from your hand and give it to the poor. The needy are the dependents of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). Besides, what is meant for you will not pass you by; it is bound reach you whether you be rich or poor, an ascetic [zahid] or one with an appetite for things [raghib].

The central point is the soundness and purity of your heart and your innermost being, both of which become pure through the acquisition of knowledge, its application in practice, sincerity in that practice, and honesty in seeking the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He).

O young man! Have you not heard the saying: "Study jurisprudence, then retire [tafaqqah thumma-'tazil]"? Study the external jurisprudence [al-fiqh az-zahir], then retire to the inner jurisprudence [al-fiqh al-batin]. Follow this outer practice until it brings you close to a knowledge you have not been applying. This outer knowledge is the light of the outer being, and the inner is the light of the inner. It is a light [diya'] between you and your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). Whenever you put your knowledge into practice, your path [tariq] to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) is shortened, the door between you and Him is widened, and He raises the panel of the door that is specially for you.

Our Lord, give us in this world good, and good in the hereafter, and guard us against the torment of the fire! (2:201)



Al-Fath ar-Rabbani - 13

It was in the schoolhouse, in the late evening of Tuesday, the 4th of Dhu'l-Qa'da, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allah be well pleased with him) said:

O young man! Give priority to the hereafter over this world, because you will then gain both of them together. If you give this world priority over the hereafter, you will lose both of them together, as your punishment for having preoccupied yourself with something you were not put in charge of. If you do not concern yourself with this world, Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He) will assist you to cope with it. He will provide you with the facility [tawfiq] and the opportunity to take from it, and when you do take something from it, it will be with His blessing [baraka].

The believer [mu'min] works for both his worldly and his otherworldly interests. For his worldly efforts he receives to the extent of his need. He is satisfied with the equivalent of a traveler's provisions; he does not obtain a great deal. The ignorant fool [jahil] is wholly concerned with this world. The ascetic ['azif] is wholly concerned with the hereafter and then the Master.

If you happen to have acquired a whole loaf of this world, and your lower self [nafs] is fighting for control and your desires are making demands, then is the time to look after those who cannot get even a slice. There is no salvation [falah] for you, until you despise your lower self and take up arms against it on the side of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He).

The champions of truth [as-siddiqun] can recognize one another. Each one of them picks up the scent of acceptance and truthfulness [sidq] from the another. O you who turn away from the Lord of Truth (Glorious and Exalted is He) and from the champions of truth among His servants, devoting yourselves to fellow creatures and associating with them, how long will your devotion to them last? What good can they do you? They have no power to harm or benefit, to give or to withhold. There is no difference between them and inanimate objects as far as harm and benefit are concerned. The King [al-Malik] is One. The Injurer [ad-

Zarr] is One. The Benefactor [an-Nafi'] is One. The Mover [al-Muharrik] and the Bringer-to-Rest [al-Musakkin] is One. The Controller [al-Musallit] is One. The Subjugator [al-Musakhkhir] is One. The Giver [al-Mu'ti] is One. The Withholder [al-Mani'] is One. The Creator [al-Khaliq] and the Sustainer [ar-Raziq] is Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He). He is the Everlasting from All Eternity to All Eternity [al-Qadim al-Azali al-Abadi]. He is Existent [Mawjud] before the creation, before your fathers and your mothers and your rich folk. He is the Creator of the heavens and the earth, of all they contain and of what lies between them.

There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.
(42:11)

How unfortunate for you, O creatures of Allah, that you do not really know your Creator! If there would be something to my credit with Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He) at the Resurrection, I would surely bear the burdens of you all, from the first of you to the last of you. O reciter of the Qur'an [muqri'], recite to me alone, away from the people of the heavens and the earth!

Whenever someone puts his knowledge into practice, it becomes a doorway between him and Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He), through which his heart enters into His presence. As for you, O learned one, you are preoccupied with idle gossip and accumulating wealth, instead of putting your knowledge into practice, so you will surely possess only the outer form [sura] of it, without the inner content [ma'na]. When Allah (Exalted is He) wishes one of His servants well, He teaches him, then He inspires him [alhamahu] to practice [what he has learned] and to do so with sincere devotion [ikhlas]. He draws him close and brings him near to Himself, informs him and instructs him in the knowledge of the heart and the innermost being, singling him out for special favor. He selects him as He selected Moses (peace be upon him), to whom He said:

I have fashioned you for Myself. (20:41)

"Not for anything other than Me. Not for passions and pleasures and vanities. Not for the earth and not for the heavens. Not for Paradise and not for the Fire [of Hell]. Not for dominion [mulk] and not for damnation [hulk]. Nothing shall keep you from Me. No other interest shall hold your attention apart from Me. No image [sura] shall distract you from Me, and no created object [khaliqa] shall block you off from Me. No desire of the flesh [shahwa] shall satisfy you as a substitute for Me."

O young man! Do not despair of the mercy of Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He) because of any sin you have committed, but wash away the dirt from the garment of your religion [din] with the water of repentance [tawba], of sustained

and sincere repentance. Then perfume and disinfect that garment with the fragrance of direct experience [ma'rifa]. Beware of this situation you are in at present, because whichever way you turn there are beasts of prey all around you, and harmful influences are at work upon you. Extricate yourself from it, and restore your heart to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). Do not live to suit your natural impulses [tab'], your lust [shahwa] and your passion [hawa], but to meet the standards of two impartial witnesses [shahidan 'adlan], namely the Book [of Allah] and the Sunna [of the Prophet]. Then look for two other witnesses, namely your heart and the working [fi'l] of Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He). If the Book, the Sunna and your heart have given you permission, wait for the fourth, meaning the working of Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He). Do not be like one who gathers wood at night, who gathers without knowing what he may be picking up. [Wait] for it to be Creator-and-creature [al-Khaliq wa'l-khalq]. This is not something that comes with self-flattery, wishful thinking, affectation and artificiality. Rather is it something that resides within the breast [sadr], and is confirmed by work ['amal]. Which work? The work that is done for the sake of Allah (Exalted is He).

O young man! Good health lies in giving up the quest for good health. Affluence lies in giving up the quest for affluence. The remedy lies in giving up the quest for the remedy. The whole of the remedy consists in submission [taslim] to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), in cutting material ties [asbab] and repudiating overlords [arbab] as far as your heart is concerned. The remedy lies in affirmation of the Oneness of Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He) with the heart, not with the tongue alone. The affirmation of Oneness [tawhid] and abstinence [zuhd] are not incumbent on the body and the tongue. The affirmation of Oneness must be in the heart. Abstinence must be in the heart. Pious devotion [taqwa] must be in the heart. Direct experience [ma'rifa] must be in the heart. Knowledge ['ilm] of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) must be in the heart. Love [mahabba] of Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He) must be in the heart, and nearness [qurb] to Him must be in the heart.

Be sensible. Do not be foolish. Do not behave artificially or in an affected manner. Your present condition is one of foolishness, artificiality, affectation, falsehood, pretense and hypocrisy. Your sole concern is getting people to notice you. Do you not realize that every step you take with your heart toward creatures is a step away from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He)? You claim to be a seeker of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), when you are really a seeker of creatures. Your likeness is that of someone who says he wishes to proceed to Mecca, then goes off in the direction of Khurasan and so gets farther away from Mecca. You claim that your heart has become detached from creatures, when you actually fear them and pin your hopes on them. Your outer show [zahir] is abstinence, but your inner reality [batin] is appetite [raghba]. Your outer show is the Truth [al-Haqq], but your inner reality is the creation [al-

khalq].

This business is not accomplished by wagging the tongue. This state of being [hala] has no room in it for creatures, for this world or the hereafter, or for anything at all apart from Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He). He is Single [wahid] and He accepts only what is single. He is Single and accepts no partner, for He is in charge of your business. You must accept what you are told. Creatures are powerless to cause you injury or bring you benefit; in such matters they are merely instruments of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). He may deal with you and with them as He sees fit. The pen has run dry on Allah's knowledge (Almighty and Glorious is He) of what is due to you and what you owe.

The righteous affirmers of Unity [al-muwahhidun as-salihun] are Allah's evidence [hujja] against the rest of His creatures. Some of them divest themselves of this world both outwardly and inwardly, while some of them divest themselves of it only insofar as their inner is concerned. The Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) sees no trace of it on their inner beings. These are the pure hearts [al-qulub as-safiya]. When someone is capable of this, he is granted the dominion of creatures. He is the valiant hero [ash-shuja' al-batal]. The hero is he who purifies his heart of all that is apart from Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He) and stands at His gate with the sword [saif] of the affirmation of Unity and the finely wrought blade [samsama] of the sacred law [shar'], allowing no created thing to enter into His presence. He connects his heart [qalb] to the Transformer of hearts [Muqallib al-qulub].

The sacred law gives training to the outer. The affirmation of Unity and gnosis [ma'rifa] give training to the inner. Hey you there! Nothing comes out of "they said..., and we said..." You say: "This is unlawful [haram]," yet you are committing it. You say: "This is lawful [halal]," yet you neither do it nor apply it. You are stupidity within stupidity. The Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) is reported as having said:

Woe to the ignorant person one time, and to the learned person seven times.

One woe to the ignorant person for not knowing, and woe to this scholar seven times over, because he knows and does not act ['alima wa-ma 'amila]. The blessedness [baraka] of knowledge is taken away from him, while its value as evidence [hujja] against him remains. You must study and then practice. Then withdraw into your private space [khalwa] away from creatures, and devote yourself to the love [mahabba] of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). When you have genuinely achieved such solitary devotion and love, He will draw you toward Himself, bring you close to Himself and absorb you into Himself. Then, if Allah so wishes, He will make you famous and put you on

public display, and send you back to fulfill your destiny [aqsam]. He will give orders to the wind of His predestination [sabiqa] and His foreknowledge ['ilm] concerning you, so it will blow against the walls of your private place and throw them down. He will make your business known to His creatures, so you will be among them on His account, not on your own account. You will receive your allotted shares [aqsam] in full, but free from the bad influences of the self [nafs], natural impulse [tab'] and desire [hawa]. He will return you to [the fulfillment of] your destiny so that the principle [qanun] of His foreknowledge concerning you shall not be annulled. You will experience all that has been allotted to you, while your heart remains with the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He).

Hear and become aware, O ignorant ones, of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) and His saints [awliya']. O you who disparage the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) and His saints! The truth is the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and falsehood is you, O creatures. The truth [al-haqq] resides in the hearts [qulub], the innermost beings [asrar] and the spiritual contents [ma'ani], while falsehood [al-batil] resides in the lower selves [nufus], the passions [ahwiya], the natural impulses [tiba'], the habitual modes of behavior ['adat], the ways of the world and all that is apart from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He).

This heart cannot prosper until it is connected to the close presence of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), the Everlasting from All Eternity [al-Qadim al-Azali], the Enduring for All Eternity [ad-Da'im al-Abadi]. Do not try to compete, O hypocrite, for you have nothing better than this. You are the slave ['abd] of your bread and butter and your candies, of your clothes and your horse and your worldly authority. The sincere heart [al-qalb as-sadiq] travels away from creatures toward the Creator. When it sees things along the way, it salutes them and passes by.

Those men of learning who put their learning into practice [al-'ulama' al-'amiluna bi-'ilmihim] are the deputies of the venerable forefathers [nuwwab as-salaf]. They are the heirs [waratha] of the Prophets [al-anbiya'] and the remnants of the worthy successors [al-khalaf]. They are paraded before these noble predecessors, who command them to build constructively in the city [madina] of the sacred law [shar'], and forbid them to let it go to ruin. They shall be assembled on the Day of Resurrection, they and the Prophets (peace be upon them) together, to receive their reward in full from their Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He).

As for the scholar who does not put his knowledge into practice, Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He) has compared him to a donkey, for He has said:

Their likeness is as the likeness of a donkey carrying tomes. (62:5)

The "tomes" [asfar] are the books of knowledge. Can a donkey derive any benefit from such books? It gets nothing from them but a weary burden and fatigue. When a person acquires more knowledge, he must also acquire more fear of his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), and greater obedience to Him. O you who lay claim to knowledge, where is your connection with the fear of Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He)? Where are your caution and your dread? Where is your acknowledgment of your sins? Where is your link with the light in the darkness, through obedience to Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He)? Where is your self-discipline, your struggle with the self and your hostility against it on the side of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He)? The only things you aspire to are the robe and the turban, food and sexual intercourse, houses and shops, spending time with people and enjoying their company. Turn your attention away from all of these things, because if any share in them is destined for you, it will come to you in its own good time. Meanwhile, your heart can be relieved of the strain of anticipation and the burden of greed, residing with the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). So why exhaust yourself over something that requires no effort?

O young man! Your seclusion [from the world] is corrupt, not genuine. It is polluted, not purified. What am I to do with you? In your heart there is no genuine affirmation of Unity [tawhid], no true sincerity [ikhlas]. O sleepy ones who are not sleepily neglected! O rejecters who are not rejected! O forgetful ones who are not forgotten! O abandoners who are not abandoned! O you who are ignorant of Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He) and His Messenger (Allah bless him and give him peace) and those who came in earlier or later times, you are like sawn-off lengths of wood that are fit for no useful purpose!

Our Lord, give us in this world good, and good in the hereafter, and guard us against the torment of the fire! (2:201)



Al-Fath ar-Rabbani - 15

It was in the guesthouse, on Sunday the 9th of Dhul-Qa'da, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allah be well pleased with him) said:

The believer [mu'min] takes his rations, while the unbeliever [kafir] takes his pleasure. The believer takes his rations because he is on a journey. He is content to use a tiny fraction of what he owns, while investing the greater part in the hereafter. Apart from giving himself a traveler's allowance, based on what he can carry, he keeps all his property in the hereafter. His heart and his aspirations [himma] are all there. His heart is concentrated there, indifferent to this world. He forwards all the merit of his acts of worship to the hereafter, not to this world and those who belong to it. If he has some tasty food, he donates it to the poor, knowing that in the hereafter he will have something even better to eat. The goal of the aspiration [himma] of the experienced ['arif] and learned ['alim] believer is the door of his nearness to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and that his heart should get there in this world, before the hereafter. Nearness to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) is the goal of the steps taken by the heart and the secret journey of the innermost being.

I see you [going through the motions of the salat-prayer:] standing upright [qiyam], sitting on your heels [qu'ud], bowing from the waist [ruku'], and falling in prostration [sujud], as you lose sleep in weary vigil. But your heart never moves from its place, never leaves the home of its being, and never changes its familiar habits. Be honest in your quest for your Master (Almighty and Glorious is He); your honesty [sidq] may enable you to dispense with a lot of exhausting effort. Peck open the egg of your being with the beak of your honesty, and knock down the walls of your devotion and attachment to creatures with the pickaxes of sincerity [ikhlas] and your affirmation of Unity [tawhid]. Break the cage of your appetite for things with the hand of your abstinence from them. Fly away with your heart until you alight on the shore of the ocean of your nearness to your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). Then the sailor of Preordination [as-sabiqa] will come to you. He will have with him the ship of Providence [al-'inaya], and so he will take you across to your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He).

This world is an ocean, and your faith [iman] is its ship. This is why Luqman the Wise [al-hakim] (may Allah's mercy be upon him) said: "O my dear son, this world is an ocean. Faith is the ship. The sailor is your obedient worship [ta'at]. The shore is the hereafter."

O you who persist in sinful disobedience! Coming to you very soon are blindness and deafness, old age and poverty, and the hardening of people's hearts toward you. Your possessions will all be gone because of losses, confiscations [musadarat] and thefts. Be sensible. Repent to your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). Do not make idols of your possessions and put your trust in them. Do not become attached to them. Evict them from your hearts. Keep them in your houses and your pockets, and with your servants [ghilman] and your agents [wukala']. Be ready for death. Diminish your appetite and reduce your expectations.

Abu Yazid al-Bistami (may the mercy of Allah be upon him) is reported as having said: "The experienced believer [al-mu'min al-'arif] seeks nothing of this world and nothing of the hereafter from Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He). All he seeks from his Master is his Master [innama yatlubu min Mawluhu Mawlahu]."

O young man! Return with your heart to Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He). One who is repentant [ta'ib] to Allah is one who is returning [raji'] to Him, and His words (Almighty and Glorious is He): "Repent unto your Lord," (39:54) i.e., "Return to your Lord," mean: "Turn back and surrender everything to Him." Surrender your own selves to Him, and cast them down in submission before His decree, His destiny, His commandment, His prohibition and His transformative workings [taqlibat]. Cast your hearts down in submission before Him, without tongues, without hands, without legs, without eyes, without "How?", without "Why?", without argument and without contradiction, but rather with agreement and confirmation. Say: "The commandment [al-amr] is true. Destiny [al-qadar] is true. Preordination [as-sabiqa] is true." If you are like this, your hearts will surely be repentant unto Him and witness Him directly. They will not take a liking to anything, but rather feel distaste for everything beneath the heavenly Throne [al-'arsh] down to the surface of the earth. They will flee from all created things, and remain separate and cut off from all temporal phenomena [muhdathat].

No one knows how to behave correctly with the Shaikhs unless he has served them and become aware of some of the spiritual states [ahwal] they experience with Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He). The people [of the Lord] have learned to treat praise and blame like summer and winter, like night and day. They regard them both as from Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He), because no one is capable of bringing them about except Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He). When this has become real for them, therefore, they do not place their confidence in those who praise them, nor do they fight with their critics, and they pay no attention to them. Their hearts have been emptied of both love and hate for creatures. They neither love nor hate, but rather feel compassion.

What benefit can you derive from knowledge without sincere belief [sidq], since Allah may allow you to go knowingly astray? You acquire learning and do

the salat-prayers and keep the fast, all for the sake of people, to get them to be well disposed toward you, to lavish their goods on you, and to sing your praises in their homes and their social gatherings. Suppose you do get all this from them; when death comes to you, and torment and anguish and terror, you will be cut off from them and they will do nothing to help you. The goods you got from them will be consumed by others, while you must suffer punishment and face the final reckoning. O deserter! O outcast! You are one of those who are "toiling, weary" (88:3) in this world, and weary tomorrow in the Fire [of Hell].

Worshipful service ['ibada] is a skilled craft, and its experts are the saints [al-awliya'] and the sincere Abdal [spiritual deputies] who are brought close to the presence of the Lord of Truth (Glorious and Exalted is He). Those scholars who put their knowledge into practice are the deputies [nuwwab] of Allah upon His earth, and of His Envoys [rusul]; they are the heirs of the Prophets [al-anbiya'] and the Messenger [al-mursalun]. Not you, O deluded fools, O you who are preoccupied with tongue-wagging and legalistic knowledge [fiqh] of the outer [az-zahir], accompanied by ignorance of the inner [al-batin].

O young man! You do not amount to anything. Islam [submission to the will of Allah] has not become a fact for you. Islam is the foundation upon which everything is built. The profession of faith [ash-shahada] has not become completely real for you. You say: "There is no god but Allah [la ilaha illa'llah]," but you are lying. In your heart there is a whole collection of gods [aliha]. Your fears of your ruler [sultan] and of your local governor [wali] are gods. Your reliance on your earned income and your profit, on your power and your strength, on your hearing and your sight and your energy, all these are gods. Your ways of viewing creatures as the source of injury and benefit, of giving and withholding, are also gods. Many people talk about these things with their hearts, while making it appear that they are talking about the Lord of Truth (Glorious and Exalted is He). Their mentioning the Lord of Truth (Glorious and Exalted is He) has become a habit for their tongues, not for their hearts. When they are challenged on this score, they fly into a rage and say: "How can such things be said of us? Are we not Muslims?" Tomorrow the shameful facts will be disclosed, and things kept hidden will be revealed.

Woe unto you! When you say: "There is no god [la ilaha]," it is an absolute negation [nafy kulli], and "except Allah [illa'llah]" is an absolute affirmation [ithbat kulli]. You are asserting this as true of Him, not of any other than Him, so whenever your heart relies upon anything other than the Lord of Truth (Glorious and Exalted is He), you are making your affirmation falsely, for the thing you have relied upon has become your god [ilah], regardless of outer appearances. It is the heart that is the believer [mu'min], that is the monotheist [muwahhid], that is sincere [mukhlis], that is devout [mutaqqi], that is pious [wari'], that is abstinent [zahid], that is convinced [muqin], that is experienced ['arif], that is

effective ['amil], that is the leader [amir] while all the rest are its troops and its followers.

When you say: "There is no god but Allah," speak first with your heart and then with your tongue. Trust in Him and rely on Him, to the exclusion of any other than Him. Devote your outer [zahir] to the law [hukm] and your inner [batin] to the Lord of Truth (Glorious and Exalted is He). Leave good and evil to your outer, and concentrate on your inner together with the Creator of good and evil. When someone knows Him directly ['arafahu], he submits to Him. His tongue grows weary in His presence. He behaves humbly toward Him and toward His righteous servants. His cares, his grief and his weeping are multiplied. His fear and his dread increase, as well as his sense of shame and his remorse for previous shortcomings. He becomes intensely wary and afraid of losing the direct experience [ma'rifa], the knowledge ['ilm] and the nearness he has attained, because the Lord of Truth (Glorious and Exalted is He) is:

Doer of what He will, (11:107) and: He shall not be questioned as to what He does, but they shall be questioned. (21:23)

He fluctuates between two prospects. Looking back over his negligence, his impudence, his ignorance and his indulgence in pleasure, he melts with shame and fears chastisement. Then he looks toward the future, wondering whether he will be accepted or rejected, whether he will be stripped of all he has been given or allowed to keep it, and whether on the Day of Resurrection he will be in the company of the believers or that of the unbelievers. This is why the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) has said:

I am the one amongst you who knows Allah best, and I am the one amongst you who fears Him most.

The most extraordinary and rare of all those who have real experience ['arifin] is one who receives safe conduct [amn]. What has been preordained for him is read out to him, so he knows his refuge and how he will come to arrive there. His innermost being [sirr] reads what is destined for him on the Preserved Tablet [al-lawh al-mahfuz]. Then it informs his heart of this, telling it to keep it a secret and not to make it known to the lower self [nafs].

The first stage of this business is Islam, compliance with the commandments and avoidance of the prohibitions, and patient endurance of misfortunes. Its final stage is the renunciation [zuhd] of everything apart from the Lord of Truth (Glorious and Exalted is He), and an attitude of indifference toward gold and dirt, praise and blame, gifts and the withholding of gifts, Paradise and the Fire [of Hell], blessing and suffering, affluence and poverty, and the presence and absence of creatures. When this has been fully accomplished, there is Allah (Almighty and

Glorious is He) beyond it all. Then comes the appointment by Him to leadership [imara] and authority [walaya] over creatures. All who see one so appointed will derive great benefit from him, because of the awesome dignity [haiba] and radiance [nur] of Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He) with which he is invested.

Our Lord, give us in this world good, and good in the hereafter, and guard us against the torment of the fire! (2:201)



Al-Fath ar-Rabbani - 17

It was in the schoolhouse, in the early morning of Friday, the 14th of Dhu'l-Qa'da, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allah be well pleased with him) said:

Do not be concerned about your sustenance [rizq], because its search for you is more intense than your search for it. When you have obtained today's sustenance, stop worrying about tomorrow's, as you have left yesterday behind. Yesterday is in the past, and as for tomorrow you do not know whether it will come to you or not, so concentrate on your today. If you really knew the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), you would be too preoccupied with Him to go looking for sustenance. His awe-inspiring majesty would prevent you from seeking anything from Him, because when someone really knows Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He) his tongue ceases to function. The knower ['arif] remains dumb and speechless in the presence of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), until He sends him back to attend to the interests of His creatures. Then, when He restores him to them, He removes the paralysis from his tongue and the impediment from his speech. When Moses (peace be upon him) was shepherding the flocks and herds, his tongue was afflicted with stammering, gabbling, mispronunciation and stuttering, so when the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) wished to send him back [to his people], He inspired him [alhamahu] to say:

Untie the knot from my tongue, that they may understand my words.
(20:27,28)

It was as if he were saying: "When I was out in the wilderness, shepherding the flocks and herds, I had no need of this, but now I have work to do among the people and I must be able to talk to them, so I need to be rid of the impediment to my speech." His Lord therefore removed the knot from his tongue. He used a vocabulary of ninety clearly intelligible terms, a small number of words in proportion to those occurring in the speech of others. In his childhood, he had been eager to speak out of turn in the presence of Pharaoh and Asiya, so Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He) had made him swallow a live coal.

O young man! I see that you have little real knowledge [ma'rifa] of Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He) and His Messenger, little real knowledge of the saints [awliya'] of Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He), of the deputies [abdal] of His Prophets, and of His vicegerents [khulafa'] among His creatures. You are devoid of meaningful content. You are a cage without a bird, an empty ruin of a house, a tree whose leaves are all withered and scattered. The edifice of the servant's heart is constructed through Islam [surrender to the will of Allah], then through the confirmation [tahqiq] thereof in its reality [haqiqa], which is submissive obedience [istislam]. Submit [sallim] the whole of yourself to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and He will make your own self and other people submit to you. You must detach your heart from you and from all creatures, and stand before Him naked of you and of them. Then, when the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) so wishes, He will clothe you and dress you and send you back to His creatures. You must therefore carry out His commandment requiring both you and them to win the good pleasure of the Messenger [rasul] (Allah bless him and give him peace) and Envoy [mursal], then stand and wait for His further orders, complying with everything He may impose upon you. Whenever someone strips himself bare of everything apart from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and stands before Him on the feet of his heart [qalb] and his innermost being [sirr], he is saying, in the language that needs no words [lisan al-hal], what Moses (peace be upon him) expressed when he said:

I have hastened to You, my Lord, that You might be well pleased. (20:84)

[Meaning:] "I have set aside my interest in this world, my interest in the hereafter, and the whole of creation. I have severed material ties [al-asbab] and cast off influential connections [al-arbab], and I have come to You in haste, that You might be well pleased with me, and forgive me for having been attached to them previously."

O ignorant one, where do you stand in all this? You are the slave of your own self [nafs], your worldly interests [dunya] and your passions [hawa]. You are the slave of creatures, idolizing them [mushrik bihim] because you regard them as the source of harm and benefit. You are next to the Garden [of Paradise], hoping to enter it, and you are next to the Fire [of Hell], afraid of entering it.

Where are you, all of you, in relation to the Transformer of hearts and eyes [Muqallib al-qulub wa'l-absar], the One who says to a thing "Be!" and it is [kun fa-yakun (2:117)]?

O young man! Do not delude yourself about your obedient worship [ta'a] and pride yourself on it. Beg the Lord of Truth (Glorified and Exalted is He) to accept it, and be wary and fearful lest He transfer you to some other condition. What guarantee do you have that your obedience will not be told to turn into disobedience, and your serenity to turn into confusion? When someone really knows Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He), he does not get attached to anything and has no illusions about anything. He does not feel secure until he leaves this world with his religion intact and having preserved his relationship with Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He).

O my people! You must activate your hearts and dedicate them sincerely. Perfect sincerity [ikhlas] is that which precludes everything apart from Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He), and direct knowledge [ma'rifa] of Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He) is the basic principle [asl]. I see most of you as no more than liars in word and deed, in private and in public. You have no constancy. You have words without deeds, and deeds with neither sincerity nor affirmation of Unity [tawhid]. If you consult the touchstone [mihakk] that is in my hands, and it is favorable to you, what good will this do you? You need to be accepted and approved by the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). Your chips must soon be exposed to smelting and the kindling of fire, and it will be said: "This is silver, this is ore, this is brass." Then the whole lot will be extracted, sorted in preparation for the Day of Judgment [yawm al-qiyam]. The same will be said of all your deeds in the performance of which you behaved hypocritically. Every deed done for the sake of any other than Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He) is null and void. Let your work, your love, your friendship and your quest be for the One who has told us:

There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.
(42:11)

Deny and affirm. Deny the attribution to Him of anything that is unworthy of Him, and affirm as belonging to Him whatever is worthy of Him, namely what He is pleased to attribute to Himself, and what His Messenger (Allah bless him and give him peace) has been pleased to attribute to Him. If you do this, your hearts will be rid of [the heretical extremes of] anthropomorphism [tashbih] and the negation of the divine attributes [ta'til].

Befriend Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He) and His Messenger, then the righteous [as-salihun] among His servants, with reverence, honor and respect. If you wish for salvation [falalah], let none of you attend my company without good manners; otherwise you should stay away. You are always going to excess, so curb your excesses during this hour while you are in my presence. Perhaps in the assembled company there is someone who deserves to be treated with respect and good manners beyond your minds and comprehension. The cook

knows his dishes, the baker knows his bread, the craftsman knows his work, and one who issues an invitation knows those who are invited to attend.

Your interest in this world has made your hearts blind, so you cannot see anything with them. Beware of it, for it will make itself available to you time after time, until it gets you more and more involved, then it will finally make you its sacrificial victim. It will let you drink its wine and its drugs [banj], then it will cut off your hands and your feet, and gouge out your eyes. When the drug has worn off and consciousness returns, you will see what it has done to you. This is the consequence of loving this world, chasing after it, and being greedy for it and what it has to offer. This is what it does, so beware of it!

O young man! There is no salvation for you as long as you love this world. And as for you, who claim to love the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), there is no salvation or success for you, as long as you love the hereafter or anything whatsoever apart from Him. The lover who really knows [al-'arif al-muhibb] loves neither the one nor the other, nor anything apart from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). When his love is complete and fully realized, he will receive his allotted worldly shares to secure his well-being and satisfy his needs. The case will be similar when he arrives in the hereafter, for everything he left behind him he will now see at the gate of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). It will have gone ahead to wait for him there, because he gave it up for the sake of Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He). He gives His friends [awliya'] their shares in things while they are keeping their distance from them. The comforts of the heart are internal [batina], and the comforts of the self are external [zahira]. The comforts of the heart come only after the self has been deprived of its comforts, so when the self is deprived, the gates of the heart's comforts are opened. Then, when the heart has received all the comforts it needs from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), mercy will come to the self. This servant will be told: "Do not kill your own self," for its share of comforts will then come to it, and it will receive them in a state of meekness [wa-hiya mutma'inna].

Leave the company of those who excite your interest in this world, and seek the company of those who encourage you to turn away from it. Like inclines toward like, each revolving around the other. The lover gravitates toward lovers, until he finds his beloved among them. Those who are lovers of Allah love one another for His sake. He surely loves them and supports them, and they give one another strength. They help one another to summon the people, inviting them to faith [iman], affirmation of Unity [tawhid] and sincerity [ikhlas] in action. They take them by the hand and set them on the path of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). He who serves is served, he who acts well is treated well, and he who gives will receive. If you act to deserve the Fire, the Fire [of Hell]

will be yours tomorrow.

As you pay allegiance, so shall you receive allegiance [kama tadinu tudanu]....

and:According to how you are, so shall authority be conferred upon you.

Your deeds are your agents [a'malukum 'ummalukum]. You act like people fit for the Fire, yet you hope for Paradise from Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He). How can you wish for Paradise without doing the work of those to whom Paradise belongs? The masters of the heart [arbab al-qulub] in this world are those who work with their hearts, not with their limbs and organs only. Work without the inner feeling [muwata'a] of the heart, what does it accomplish? The showy pretender [mura'i] works with his physical organs, while the sincere person [mukhlis] works with his heart as well as his physical organs; he works with his heart before his physical organs. The believer [mu'min] is alive, while the hypocrite [munafiq] is dead. The believer works for the sake of Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He), while the hypocrite works for the sake of creatures, and looks to them for praise and reward for his work. The work of the believer is in both his outer and his inner, in both his private and his public life, in good times and in bad. The work of the hypocrite is in his public life only. His work is there when times are good, but when hardship comes along he does no work. He has no friendship for Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He). He has no faith in Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He), His Messengers or His Books. He does not remember the Gathering [hashr], the Resurrection [nashr] and the Reckoning [hisab]. His Islam is to keep his head and his property safe [li-yaslama] in this world, not to keep him safe in the hereafter from the Fire that is the chastisement of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). He keeps the fast [yasumu], performs the prescribed prayers [yusalli], and studies religious knowledge in the presence of people, but when they are not around he reverts to his own business and his unbelief [kufr].

O Allah, we take refuge with You from this condition. We beg You for sincerity in this world and sincerity tomorrow. Amin.

O young man! You must practice sincerity in your actions. Look beyond your work and the expectation of recompense for it from creatures [al-khalq] and Creator [al-Khaliq]. Work for the sake of Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He), not for His blessings. Be one of those who long for His countenance. Seek His countenance until He grants your wish. Then, when He grants you this, you will obtain Paradise in this world and the hereafter: nearness to Him in this world, and in the hereafter the vision of Him. The fulfillment of His promise is a contract and guarantee [bai' wa-daman].

O young man! Deliver your own self and your property into the hand of His destiny [qadar], His decree [hukm] and His judgment [qada']. Deliver the purchase [al-mushtara] to the Purchaser [al-mushtari] and tomorrow He will pay you the price.

Servants of Allah! Deliver your own selves to Him, the price and the object of value. Say: "The self, property, Paradise and everything apart from You, all are Yours. We wish for nothing apart from You." The neighbor [jar] before the house [dar]. The companion [rafiq] before the road [tariq]. O you who desire the Garden [of Paradise], its purchase and cultivation must be today, not tomorrow. Increase its irrigation channels and let water flow in them today, not tomorrow.

O my people! On the Day of Resurrection, hearts and eyes will be turned inside out. On that day when feet will stumble, every one of the believers will stand upon the footing of his faith and his pious devotion [taqwa]. The steadiness of their feet will depend on the degree of their faith. On that day:

The wrong-doer will bite his own hands. (25:27)

[That is,] for having done wrong, and the pervert [mufsid] will bite his own hands for having caused corruption and not having put it right, for having run away from his Master.

O young man! Do not overestimate the value of a deed, for deeds are valued according to their ultimate outcomes. You must beg the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) to make your outcome good, and to restrict you to those actions that He likes best. Beware, then again beware, when you repent, lest you undo your repentance and lapse back into sin. Do not lapse from your repentance because of something someone may say. Do not conform to your lower self [nafs], your passions [hawa] and your natural impulses [tab'], while opposing your Master (Almighty and Glorious is He). The sin is committed today, and tomorrow, since you have disobeyed the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), He will leave you in the lurch and will not help you.

O Allah, help us to be obedient to You, and do not desert us because of disobedience toward You.

Give us in this world good, and good in the hereafter, and guard us against the torment of the fire! (2:201)



Al-Fath ar-Rabbani - 22

It was in the guesthouse, in the early morning of the last day of Dhu'l-Qa'da, A.H. 545, that the Shaikh (may Allah be well pleased with him) said, after some discussion, when someone asked: "How can I evict the love of this world from my heart?":

Notice the world's fickle treatment of its lords [arbab] and its sons, how it tricks them, plays games with them, and pushes them behind it, then promotes them step by step, in order to raise them above the people and put them in control of them, and in order to display its treasures and its wonders. But while they are enjoying their lofty status, their dominance, their pleasant lifestyle and having the world at their service, this is when it seizes them, binds them, cheats them and throws them headlong down from that elevated position, so that they are dismembered, disintegrated and destroyed, while the world stands there laughing at them with Iblis by its side, laughing along with it. This is what it has done and will do with many of the emperors, kings and rich men, from the time of Adam (peace be upon him) till the Day of Resurrection. It exalts then abases, promotes then sets back, enriches then impoverishes, nurtures then sacrifices. Rare indeed are the few individuals who remain unharmed by it, who master it instead of being dominated by it, who receive help against it and escape its greedy clutches. There is no escape from its greedy clutches unless one knows it really well, and is intensely wary of it and of its cunning tricks.

O questioner, if you observe its faults with the eyes of your heart, you will be able to evict it from your heart. But if you look at it with the eyes in your head, you will be distracted by its charm instead of noticing its faults. You will be unable to evict it from your heart and to abstain from it, and it will kill you as it has killed others. Struggle with your own self [nafs] until it becomes tame. Once it has become tame, it will recognize the faults of this world and abstain from it. Its tameness [tuma'nina] consists in its taking instruction from the heart, complying with the wishes of the innermost being [sirr], obeying both of these in all they may command or forbid, and being satisfied when they give and patient when they withhold. Once it has become tame, it will become attached to the heart and will rely upon it. You will see the crown of pious devotion [taqwa] on its head, and the robes of nearness clothing it.

You must develop faith [iman] and belief [tasdiq], and give up disbelieving the people [of the Lord] and quarreling with them. Do not dispute

with them, for they are kings in this world and the hereafter. They possess the nearness of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), so they possess everything that is apart from Him. The Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) has enriched their hearts. He has filled them with His nearness [qurb] and intimate friendship [uns] with Him, and with His radiant lights [anwar] and His gracious favor [karama]. They are not impressed by the power of those who belong to this world and of those who exploit it. They do not pay attention to its beginning, but concentrate on its final outcome ['aqiba] and its passing away [fana']. They focus the eyes of their innermost beings [asrar] on the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). They worship neither from fear of destruction [hulk] nor in hope of dominion [mulk]. He has created them for His own sake and to perpetuate His friendly company [suhba], and "He creates that which you do not know" (16:8), for He is "Doer of what He will" (85:16).

"When the hypocrite talks, he lies. When he makes a promise he breaks it, and when he is trusted he betrays." If a person is innocent of these vices mentioned by the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace), he is innocent of hypocrisy [nifaq]. These characteristics are the touchstone and the distinction between the believer [mu'min] and the hypocrite [munafiq]. Take this touchstone and this mirror, and use it to examine the face of your heart. Look to see whether you are a believer or a hypocrite, a monotheist [muwahhid] or a polytheist [mushrik].

Everything in this world is a temptation [fitna] and a distraction, except what is taken with a worthy intention [niyya saliha] for the sake of the hereafter. If one's intention is worthy in dealing with this world, it becomes otherworldly. Any blessing [ni'ma] that is received without gratitude to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) is a curse [niqma]. Secure the blessings of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) by giving thanks to Him. Two things constitute thankfulness to the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He): The first is taking advantage of blessings in order to perform acts of obedience [ta'at] and to provide comfort to the poor. The second is acknowledging the Benefactor [al-Mun'im] who supplies them, and giving thanks to the One who bestows them, namely the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He).

A certain wise man (may the mercy of Allah be upon him) is reported as having said: "Everything that distracts you from Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He) is unlucky [mash'um] for you." If remembrance [dhikr] of Him distracts you from Him, it is unlucky for you. Prayer [salat], fasting [sawm], pilgrimage [hajj] and all acts of charity—all of this is unlucky for you. If His blessings distract you from Him, then they are unlucky for you. You have repaid His blessings with sins against Him and resorting in important

matters to others instead of Him. Falsehood and hypocrisy have gained control of you in action and at rest, of your outer form [sura] and your inner content [ma'na], by night and by day. Satan has cunningly deceived you and has made lying and wicked deeds appear attractive to you. You are lying even in your ritual prayer [salat], because you say: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is Supremely Great]!" But you are lying, because in your heart you have a god [ilah] other than Him. Whatever you rely on is your god. Everything you fear, or look to in hope, is your god. Your heart is not in harmony with your tongue. Your deeds do not match your words. Say "Allahu Akbar" a thousand times with your heart and once with your tongue. Do you not feel ashamed of saying: "La ilaha illa'llah [There is no god but Allah]," when you have a thousand objects of worship [ma'bud] besides Him? Repent to Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He) for everything you are involved in.

O you who impart knowledge, though you are satisfied with it in name alone, without the practical application, what good can it do you to say, "I am a scholar," since you are telling a lie? How can you feel at ease with yourself, when you are instructing others to do what you yourself do not practice? As Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

Why do you say what you do not do? (61:2)

Woe unto you! You tell people to be honest, while you are false. You tell them to affirm the divine Unity [tawhid], while you are a polytheist [mushrik]. You tell them to be sincere, while you are a hypocrite. You tell them to give up sins, while you are committing them. The sense of shame [haya'] has departed from your sight. If you had any faith, you would feel ashamed. As the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) has said:

The sense of shame is part of faith [al-haya'u mina'l-iman].

You have no faith [iman], no conviction [iqan] and no loyalty [imana]. You have betrayed knowledge ['ilm], so your loyalty has vanished and you been recorded with Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He) as a traitor. I know of no remedy for you except repentance and persistence therein. When a person has genuine faith in Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He) and His decree, he surrenders all his affairs to Him, and makes no one a partner [sharik] to Him where they are concerned. Do not associate creatures or material means [asbab] with Him, and do not be obliged to them instead of to Him! Once the person has really achieved this, He delivers him from misfortunes in all his spiritual states [ahwal], and he now progresses from faith [iman] to conviction [iqan]. Then saintship [wilaya] will come to him, [then] Badaliyya, and then Ghawthiyya. Perhaps Qutbiyya will come in the last of his spiritual states. The Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He) will glory in him [yubahi bihi] in

the presence of all His creatures, be they jinn, human beings, angels or spirits [arwah]. He will promote him and draw him near. He will give him authority over His creatures. He will grant him sovereignty and power. He will love him and cause His creatures to love him.

The basis and starting point of all this is faith and belief [tasdiq] in Him and His Messengers. The foundation of this business is Islam, then faith, then putting into practice the Book of Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He) and the law [shari'a] of His Messenger (Allah bless him and give him peace), then sincerity [ikhlas] in action, together with the heart's affirmation of Unity [tawhid]. With the perfection of faith, the believer becomes extinct [yafna] to himself, to his work, and to everything apart from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), so that he performs his deeds while he is in a state of detachment [ma'zil] from them. He continues to struggle with his own self [nafs] and all creatures, on the side of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), until He guides him to His path. As Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

As for those who strive in Our cause, We surely guide them in Our ways.
(29:69)

You must be abstemious in all things, since you are now ready to accept His management [tadbir]. He turns them [His creatures] over and over with the hand of His destiny [qadar], then if they conform to it He transfers them to His power [qudra]. What bliss [ya tuba] for those who comply with destiny, who wait for the action [fi'l] of the Preordainer [al-Muqaddir], who act in accordance with destiny, who travel along with destiny, and who are not ungrateful for the blessing of destiny's decrees [aqdar] ! The token [aya] of the blessing of the Preordainer is His mercy [rahma], nearness [qurb] to Him, and satisfaction with Him to the exclusion of all His creatures. When the servant's heart attains to the contact with his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), He makes him so satisfied with Himself that he has no need of creatures. He draws him near, grants him power and sovereignty, and says to him:

You are today in our presence established and worthy of trust.(12:54)

He makes him vicegerent in His kingdom, as the Pharaoh of Egypt made Joseph (peace be upon him) his vicegerent, delegating to him the power to rule his kingdom and its subjects and to administer his dominion and its resources, and appointing him custodian of his treasuries. The experience of the heart is similar. Once it is truly sound, and its nobility and its purity from everything apart from its Master (Almighty and Glorious is He) are clearly apparent, He puts it in charge of His servants and His kingdom, in both worldly and otherworldly spheres, so that it comes to be like the Ka'ba of those who seek

and aspire to follow the path to this knowledge ['ilm] and practice ['amal] through outer knowledge [al-'ilm az-zahir].

Do not make a habit of idleness and laziness in obeying the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), because He will inflict chastisement upon you. The Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) is reported as having said:

When the servant is lax in performance, Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He) afflicts him with anxiety.

He afflicts him with anxiety over things that have not been allotted to him, with the worry of dependents, family problems, lack of profit in his livelihood, rebelliousness on the part of his children, and a discordant relationship with his wife. All this will affect him, whichever way he may turn, as a punishment for his laxity in obeying his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), and for letting himself be distracted from Him by this world and creatures. As Allah (Exalted is He) has said:

What concern has Allah for your punishment if you are thankful and believe? (4:147)

Nor is it permissible for anyone to argue against Him on the grounds that his conduct and the verdict thereon were subject to His predetermination [qada'] and His predestination [qadar].

He shall not be questioned as to what He does, but they shall be questioned. (21:23)

Woe unto you! How long will you go on being preoccupied with yourself and your family, to the neglect of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He)? A certain wise man (may the mercy of Allah be upon him) is reported as having said: "When your son has learned to gather date-stones, leave him alone and concentrate on your own self together with your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He)." What he meant by this was that, once the boy has learned that date-stones are useful for some purpose, and that they are worth a price, he has already learned enough to fend for himself, so you should not waste your time and energy on him, since he can manage very well without you.

Teach your children practical skills, and leave yourself free to serve Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He), because your wife and children can in no way enable you to dispense with Allah. Accustom yourself, your wife and your children to being satisfied with bare necessities, while you and they devote yourselves to your Master (Almighty and Glorious is He). If an abundance of fortune [rizq] awaits you in the invisible realm [al-ghaib], it will come to you

at the time appointed for it in the presence of Allah. You must recognize it as from the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), and steer clear of idolatrous association [shirk] with creatures. If destiny does not hold such abundance in store for you, however, you can do without things through your abstemiousness [zuhd] and frugality [qana'a].

When a frugal believer has some worldly need, he enters the presence of his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) with the feet of his begging, his entreaty, his humble submission and his repentance. Then, if He gives him what he wishes, he thanks Him for His gift, and if He does not grant his request, he concurs with the refusal and patiently accepts His will, with neither protest nor argument. He does not seek enrichment through his religion [din], his pretense [riya'], his hypocrisy [nifaq] and his underhand dealings [tanammus], as you do, O hypocrite [munafiq] ! Pretense, hypocrisy and sins are the cause of poverty, humiliation and dismissal from the door of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). The hypocritical pretender gets the things of this world through his religion, and by assuming the guise of the righteous [as-salihun] without being worthy of it. He adopts their way of speaking and their style of dress, but he does not behave as they behave. He claims to be related to them, though he is no kin of theirs. Your saying: "There is no god but Allah [la ilaha illa'llah] " is a mere claim [da'wa]. The hard evidence [bayyina] is your total trust [tawakkul] in Him, your confidence [thiqa] in Him, and your heart's rejection of any other than Him.

O liars, tell the truth! O fugitives from your Master, return! Direct your hearts toward the door of the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He), become reconciled with Him and apologize to Him. In the state of faith [iman], you take from this world by permission of the sacred law [shar']. In the state of saintship [wilaya] you receive by virtue of the commandment of Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He), with both of them bearing witness to it, meaning with the testimony [shahada] of both the Book and the Sunna. In the state of Badaliyya and Qutbiyya, you receive through the action [fi'l] of Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He), as you leave things up to Him.

O young man! Have you no sense of shame? Weep for yourself, because you have been deprived of right direction [sawab] and the help you need to succeed [tawfiq]. Are you not ashamed? One day you are obedient, then disobedient the next. One day you are sincere [mukhlis], but the next you are a polytheist [mushrik]. The Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) is reported as having said:

If both days are the same for a person, he is defrauded [maghbun], and if someone's yesterday was better than his today, he is deprived [mahrum].

O young man! You cannot make something happen, but you must play your part. Exert yourself and help will come from your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He). Get moving in this ocean in which you are immersed, then the waves will lift you up and roll you toward the shore. The prayer [du'a'] is from you, and the response is from Him. The effort [ijtihad] is from you, and the aid to success [tawfiq] is from Him. The renunciation [tark] is from you, and the protective zeal [hamiyya] is from Him. Be sincere in your quest and He will show you the entrance to His nearness. You will see the hand of His mercy reaching out toward you, and His kindness [lutf], His generosity [karam] and His love [mahabba] all yearning for you. This is the goal of the quest of the [Lord's] people.

What am I to do with you, O slaves of the lower selves [nufus], the natural impulses [tiba'], the passions [ahwiya] and the devils [shayatin]? I have nothing at my disposal except a truth within a truth [haqq fi haqq], an understanding within an understanding [lubb fi lubb], a purity within a purity [safa' fi saf'a'], a separation [qat'] and a connection [wasl]—a separation from everything apart from Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He) and a connection with Him.

I shall not yield to your deluded folly, O hypocrites, O pretenders, O liars! I am not ashamed to confront you. How can I feel any sense of shame before you, when you have no shame before your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), but behave insolently toward Him, and have so little respect for His care and for His angels appointed as your guardians? I possess a candid sincerity [sidq], with which I shall cut off the head of every unbeliever [kafir] and lying hypocrite [munafiq] who does not repent and return to his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) on the feet of his repentance and his apology. A certain wise man (may the mercy of Allah be upon him) is reported as having said: "Candid sincerity is the sword of Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He) upon His earth. It cuts through anything on which it is brought to bear."

Take instruction from me, because I am a true counselor [nasih] for you. I seek you for your own sakes. I am dead to you and alive in the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). Those who trust me in friendship will benefit and prosper, but if anyone treats me as a liar and distrusts my friendship, he will be deprived and punished both now and in the future.

The means to real knowledge [ma'rifa] of Him include giving up arguing and remonstrating with Him, and a ready acceptance of His management [tadbir]. This is why Malik ibn Dinar said to one of his pupils: "If you wish for real knowledge of Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He), you must be happy to accept His management and His ordainment [taqdir], and you must not treat your own self, your desire, your natural impulse and your will [irada] as

partners [shuraka'] with Him in these two."

O you who are sound in body! O you who idly neglect your tasks! What are you missing from your Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He)? If your hearts were aware of this, you would feel sorrow and regret. Wake up!

O my people! You will soon be dead. Weep for yourselves, before you are wept over. You have sins crowding an uncertain outcome. Your hearts are sick with love of this world and greed to possess it. Treat them with the medicines of abstinence and renunciation, and by approaching the Lord of Truth (Almighty and Glorious is He). Religious integrity [salamatu'd-din] is the capital, and righteous deeds [al-a'mal as-saliha] are the profits. Stop looking for things that make you go to excess, and be content with what is sufficient for you. An intelligent person takes no pleasure in anything if its lawful use must be accounted for [halaluhu hisab], while its unlawful use incurs punishment [haramuhu 'iqab]. Most of you have forgotten about the punishment and the reckoning.

O young man! If some worldly object is present before you, and you notice that your heart is recoiling from it, you should leave it alone. But you have no heart. You are nothing but self, natural impulse and desire. You must make friends with those who do possess hearts, until you get a heart of your own. You need a wise Shaikh, who practices the law [hukm] of Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He), to train you, teach you, and give you good advice.

O you who have sold everything for nothing, and paid everything to buy nothing, you have bought this world at the price of the hereafter, and you have sold the hereafter for this world. You are a delusion within a delusion, a void within a void, ignorance within ignorance. You eat as cattle eat, without investigation, without consideration and without question, without conscious intention [niyya], without [waiting to receive] an [inner] command or action. The believer eats what is allowed by the sacred law [shar']. The saint [wali] is ordered to eat, or forbidden to do so, as indicated by his heart [qalb]. The Badal does not concern himself with anything; things just work within him, while he is in his absence [ghaiba] with his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He) and his annihilation [fana'] in Him. Thus the Wali stands by the [inner] commandment, while the Badal is stripped of personal volition [ikhtiyar], and all of this is accompanied by observance of the rules of sacred law [hudud ash-shar']. One who becomes extinct [fani] to himself and to all creatures still observes the rules of sacred law. Then he is cast adrift in the ocean of divine power [qudra]. Its waves lift him up at one moment, and plunge him down at another. Sometimes they roll him toward the shore, and at other times they let him fall to the depths of the sea. He comes to resemble the Companions of the

Cave [Ashab al-Kahf], concerning whom Allah (Almighty and Glorious is He) has said:

And we turned them over to the right, then over to the left. (18:18)

They had no faculties with which to think or plan or feel. They were in the House of Grace and Nearness, with their eyes closed outwardly [zahiran] and inwardly [batinan]. In like manner, therefore, this nearness will have closed the eyes of his heart to everything apart from his Lord (Almighty and Glorious is He), so that he sees only for His sake and through Him, and hears only from Him.

O Allah, make us extinct to everything apart from You! Cause us to exist in You, and:

Give us in this world good, and good in the hereafter, and guard us against the torment of the fire! (2:201)

